

Seeing the Elephant

Colorado Gold Rush drummer, surprised
by the circus parade, his goods
helter-skeltered along spooked horses.

Hours to gather up (as God might say).
At the saloon they say "Weren't you mad?"
"Of course not! I saw the elephant!"

It becomes the text to underscore and
gloss the madness of the murders, the
starving, the gamblers and the tarts.

And when the hard luck husks all go home,
broke, tubercular, spitting blood, just short

of the real gathering up. How was it?
they'd ask in sensible Indiana.

No matter the answer when you've
seen the elephant.